# NAQCC News

| Mar 26, 2011 | NAQCC Web Site | Issue #139 |
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**1. APRIL CHALLENGE:** Those of us in many parts of the Northern Hemisphere know that this is the month folks plan and plant gardens so logically we have a garden alphabet challenge. Tom has come up with a list of words relating to gardening for you to challenge yourself to make this month. I don't think there is much more to be said here. It is good to see that we are getting some new participants in our challenges recently to join those who show up faithfully just about every month. Challenges are a great alternative to those who don't care for sprints or contests or who because of work or other commitments can't participate in our sprints. They can still help in promoting CW and QRP by participating in our challenges. You can do a challenge on your own schedule any time of the month. We'd love to have you try your hand (fist?) in one of our challenges if you haven't done so before. They are a great encouragement for you to be more active on CW and help preserve and promote use of this wonderful ham radio mode.

I think that sums it up. After you finish reading the newsletter, head to the challenge rules pages here to make final plans for the challenge. See the alphabet tutorial there for tips on an easy way to track your alphabet challenges.

**2. MARCH SPRINT RESULTS:** The March sprint was the 12th in a row we surpassed the 100 logs mark with 116. You folks are so wonderful in your dedication to the NAQCC and its sprints. We can't thank you enough. Now that conditions are finally vastly improving, we're thinking that somewhere down the road before too much longer, the 200 log mark may become a reality. By a quick count in our database that keeps track of logs and results for all of our 77 sprints we've had so far, there have been 822 different folks send in a sprint report. If they would all participate and report results in the next sprint, wouldn't that be something. Our

sprints would be ranked up there with some of the major contests. I think we're already a major force in sprint activity. Again not because of anything we do, but because of your dedication to the club and your pride in being a member.

Without further ado, let's get to the results.

Except for 20M and 40M QSO's, our stats were down just a tad from February, although as expected with the QRN season starting, 80M QSO's were down a lot. Personally though, I found 80 to be in great shape.

| Stats | Current Month | Previous Month | All-Time Record | Mo/Yr |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Logs** | 116 | 118 | 135 | 8/10 |
| **Participants** | 168 | 169 | 211 | 8/10 |
| **Total QSO's** | 1587 | 1657 | 1929 | 8/10 |
| **Hour 1 QSO's** | 837 | 901 | 1028 | 8/10 |
| **Hour 2 QSO's** | 750 | 756 | 921 | 6/10 |
| **20M QSO's** | 419 | 0 | 1000 | 6/10 |
| **40M QSO's** | 874 | 735 | 1277 | 8/10 |
| **80M QSO's** | 294 | 922 | 927 | 1/11 |
| **Avg QSO's per stn** | 13.7 | 14.0 | 19.1 | 9/06 |

| **AWARDS** | |
|---|---|
| **SWA Category** | |
| **Division** | **Winner** |
| **W1** | WA1BXY |
| **W2** | NW2K |
| **W3** | K3WWP |
| **W4** | K8IJ |
| **W5** | WF5W |
| **W6** | N6DIT |
| **W7** | NX1P |
| **W8** | AC8AP |
| **W9** | KB0KFX |
| **W0** | N0TA |
| **Canada** | VE3RCN |
| **DX** | n/a |
| **Other Categories** | |
| **Gain** | K4BAI |
| **First time entrant high scorer** | NW2K |
| **Paddle/bug handle K1/K2 knob insert** | VE5BCS |

| drawing | |
|---|---|

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually there are no non-winners. Everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because you have helped show the ham radio world that there are many folks still using and enjoying CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

Very special thanks to those who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Your reports are important also.

We had a total of 10 stations who didn't submit a log show up 5-23 times in the 116 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully they and many others will be back next month AND submit a log. Remember submitting a log doubles the strength of your statement that you support CW operation.

We welcome these hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope they will continue to participate and report their results:
NW2K AA4GA N5RKD WB4MNK K5ACO WK6L N9AWP AA8SN K6ACJ N3PDT AE5KA N4JD VE2KOT AD4PM AD7KS NN9S W7GAH

GOLDEN LOGS. Everyone who submits a log with exactly the correct format as defined in the rules plus has every bit of info (numbers, states, etc.) correct in the log gets a listing in the GOLDEN LOGS section in the results. Many clubs penalize mistakes in logging, some to the point of disqualification if there are too many mistakes. We don't do anything like that other than fixing a score if a mistake changes it. Instead of penalizing errors, we will reward perfection.

There also is going to be a prize awarded to the one who has the most GOLDEN LOGS each year. We are still awaiting to hear from the ARRL on a potential prize, but the winner for 2010 is definitely Art WB8ENE who has been perfect each month since we started the GOLDEN LOG feature back in March 2010.

I had no idea the GOLDEN LOG feature would become so very popular when it was started. However it almost seems like more hams strive for a GOLDEN LOG listing than try to win their division. 'Strive for' is the key phrase in that sentence. We should always strive to be our very best in all that we do in life. That's what makes life the fascinating experience it is. If we try to attain something and fall a bit short, we should not be discouraged or feel inferior, but we should 'strive for' that goal again and be proud when we make it. Perhaps that sums up the reason for the popularity of the GOLDEN LOG feature. And there is not one single person for whom a GOLDEN LOG is out of reach. Because of numerous factors, not everyone can win their division, but with a very little attention to detail, everyone can submit a GOLDEN LOG.

We hope that is an incentive to run a fine-tooth comb through your logs before submitting them.

GOLDEN LOG's were submitted by 45 participants this month. To see if you're one of them, check the results page.

225 different hams have submitted at least one GOLDEN LOG since we started keeping track in March 2010. Here's a Top 5 (+ ties) list of most GOLDEN LOG's:
WB8ENE - 13 (all)
N8XMS - 11
K0HJC - 9
KU4A - 9

KB1PBA - 8
KD5MMM - 8
W9CC - 8

Thanks to all GOLDEN LOGgers for making my cross-checking job that much easier.

Full sprint info here.

## 3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- Not much out-and-out news to report so let's take a quick look at how our various activities are progressing.

Sprints - This is our flagship activity, it seems. As is well documented in every newsletter, our sprints are among the most popular two-hour weekday sprints in all of ham radio. It's our norm now to get 100+ logs from 150+ participants in each sprint.

Challenges - Although not experiencing the explosive growth of our sprints, the challenges are becoming more and more popular. We used to have a norm of a single figure number of participants each month. Now at least we usually see double figures almost every month. The alphabet type challenges seem to be catching on more than any others. Perhaps it's because our monthly challenge concept is somewhat unique in ham radio unlike sprints that we don't have still more participants. I think if you just try a challenge, you will be hooked from now on. We try our best to make sure they are neither too easy nor too hard and can be mastered by anyone with a little time and effort.

Nets - We now have someone (Brian WB9TPA) who has the time to devote to managing our nets, and since he has come aboard, our number of nets has increased from 1 to 4. We've waited a long time for our nets to develop, but they were hindered by a lack of time from those who had many other things to do with the club. Now with Brian in charge, we see wonderful things ahead.

Elmer Project - Or as he has re-christened it, 'CW Assistance', Ron K5DUZ finally has the time to actively develop this facet of the club as I'm sure you've noticed in the past few newsletters. Ron is a wonderful teacher of CW concepts, and I foresee many members increasing their CW proficiency under his tutelage.

Chapters - We're slowly developing this feature. With European, Minnesota, and Texas chapters started and a couple others in the works, we see growth here as well as with all other aspects of the club. There are no real hard and fast rules for chapters, other than it must be clear they are strictly NAQCC chapters independent of other clubs. Basically they are just a way to get members in a certain area to get together, share experiences, fellowship, whatever local folks do when they have a common interest like being NAQCC members and enjoying QRP and CW. If you would like to start a chapter in your area, let us know and we'll send you a list of guidelines on how to go about it.

Awards - This is perhaps a disappointing area of the club. Except for the 1000 MPW award for which we've issued over 100 certificates, all other awards seem to develop very little interest except from a few members. We've recently made a major change in our awards program by eliminating any fee for the awards if you will accept a certificate emailed to you. We still charge a minimal fee to cover costs if you wish us to print and mail your certificate to you. Hopefully this will pick up interest and I (K3WWP) and a few others won't feel so alone and embarrassed

there in the awards winners listing. All our awards are achievable by everyone with a little effort. I'd especially like to see our Friendship Club award become more popular as I think it is unique among other worked members awards in which all they do is exchange numbers. Our award encourages fellowship among members by assigning more points to a QSO that goes beyond the standard exchange of info to a discussion of various matters like other hobbies and interests, jobs, schooling... just to name a few.

Activity days - I think this feature will join the bear hunt as a defunct feature. There has never been a bit of 'activity' reported since we started it. Well, not all really good ideas succeed in this world for whatever reason.

Members Picture Gallery - I think this is a great feature as it is always nice to put a face to those dits and dahs coming at you in your headphones or speaker. We have photos of 265 members currently in the gallery, and there's room for a lot more. C'mon and grab your digital camera, give it to a friend or relative and have them take a shot of you with your face a prominent part of the picture and large enough so we can easily crop and resize it without losing quality. Attach the picture to an email to **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**. We'll do the rest.

Club Items - We are not sure how sales of NAQCC items are going, since they are handled by businesses not directly a part of the NAQCC. We hope sales are going well for these businesses. We're talking about NAQCC caps or hats, NAQCC membership plaques, and NAQCC QSL cards. You can check these out in the sub-pages in the Home section of the NAQCC web site. If you're proud to be a NAQCC member, one or all of these items should be of interest to you, and they are all reasonably priced.

Prizes - See the Awards/Prizes section of the newsletter below to see how popular our prizes are and how much they are appreciated by their winners. We thank those members who have donated prizes to the club. We hope the prize donations will keep coming in as they have been throughout the entire existence of the club.

- We're still waiting for suggestions for a new poll question. We're going to leave the current poll up until someone suggests a new one that we can use. If you did send one, and haven't heard from us, please send again to **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**. Sometimes emails go astray. For now, a poll question should be one that lends itself to just one answer. Example: What is your favorite QRP/CW band?, NOT On which bands do you operate QRP?

- Just a quick reminder we're continuing with the hidden call sign idea originally suggested by Bill KB3XS. Somewhere in this newsletter is a call sign of a member in a place that is definitely out of context and containing a mix of upper and lower case letters. If it is YOUR call sign and YOU find it, email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** BEFORE the publication date of the next newsletter (March 12) and win a gift certificate for 100 NAQCC QSL cards produced by the CheapQSLs.com company run by Hal K6RF (#0171) and donated by the NAQCC thanks to your generous monetary donations to the club. Cheap refers only to the price of the cards, NOT the quality which is superb. So far we've had 44 hidden calls and only 7 'eagle-eyed' winners - KD1R, KM6NN, K4UK, K5RIX, N9AKF, W1ICU, N4OLN.

## 3a. CHAPTER NEWS:

Here is where our club chapters present news about their chapter activities. We currently have three chapters - European, Minnesota, and Texas. We're looking forward to expanding that roster. Chapters are more or less independent local gatherings organized by members in a

geographical kL7vX area and subject to a list of guidelines under the auspices of the NAQCC. If you would be interested in starting a chapter in your area, let us know and we'll send a copy of the guidelines.

## NAQCC EUROPEAN CHAPTER:

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Items in this section are from EU Chapter President Matt MW3YMY unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **MATT@MATTIRELAND.CO.UK**
The EU Chapter web site is at http://www.naqcc-eu.org/

## NAQCC MINNESOTA CHAPTER:

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Items in this section are from Keith K0HJC (R) unless otherwise credited.
The chapter was founded by Bob K9OSC (L).
Questions or comments should go to Chapter President Rich WD0K at pix_email_wd0k .
The MN Chapter web site is at http://www.naqccmn.com/

Greetings from the Minnesota Chapter! Spring thaw is underway, water is moving, and QRN is back! KD0V's code classes will finish up March 31st; we will miss the code practice and on-air contacts from Merlin's garage. Sideband rag-chew is at 1500 GMT on 3.707 Mhz. We are also listening for the QRS nets as propagation allows. WD0K worked into the PNW net, and K0HJC got into NQN. Good practice for us shaky old guys. Our next brunch is Friday, April 15th in Apple Valley. Visit our Minnesota Chapter Website at http://www.naqccmn.com/ for more details.

## NAQCC TEXAS CHAPTER:

Items in this section are from TX Chapter Director Ron K5DUZ unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to **WEBMASTER7388@NAQCCTX.COM**
The TX Chapter web site is at http://www.naqcctx.com/

Allen, KA5TJS had this to say about last Monday evening's East Texas QRS Net: "Great net tonight. Only two check-ins but two great QSOs, KE5YGA, Andy, 579, AR and K5KCM, Randy, 599, TX. No QRM but the QRN was up to about S5."

The East Texas QRS Net is open to all hams regardless of QTH, so check in with Allen to say "HI" and enjoy some quality QSO time each Monday evening Texas time at 1900 CDST (2400 UTC) on 3564.5 KHz. QSY up a bit for QRM. The March NAQCC Sprint saw seven Texas hams submitting logs. WF5W took top W5 Division and Texas Chapter honors with 33 QSOs and 3072 points. We are still seeking volunteers to "Elmer" local hams and prospective hams. Please send us your interests and contact information. You can find the NAQCC Texas Chapter website at http://www.naqcctx.com/. Until next time, help eradicate some tree and

grass pollen with QRP RF!

## 4. THE NAQCC QRS Nets:

Items in this section are from Net Manager Brian WB9TPA unless otherwise credited.
Questions or comments should go to Brian at pix email wb9tpa (1K)

NAQCC QRS Nets schedule and recent activity report:

### NAQCC QRS Net (Main)

Schedule: Sunday evenings local time which is Monday 0000Z on 3562.5 kHz.

```
Date(UTC)    NCS          Participants
```

### NAQCC ET QRS Net (East Texas)

Monday evenings local time which is Tuesday 0000Z on 3564.5 kHz.

```
Date(UTC)    NCS          Participants
02/22/11   KA5TJS   3 - KA5TJS KE5YGA K5KCM
03/08/11   KA5TJS   5 - KA5TJS KE5YGA W5IQS K8QI K0HJC
```

### NAQCC ECN (East Coast Net)

Thursday evenings local time which is Friday 0130Z on 3565 kHz.
Will begin in April

```
Date(UTC)    NCS          Participants
```

### NAQCC PNW QRS Net (Pacific NorthWest

Schedule: Thursday evenings local time which is Friday 0200Z on 3574 kHz.

```
Date(UTC)    NCS          Participants
02/24/11   K7ZNP   7 - K7ZNP K7ALG NU7T N6GND N6VOH N6KIX K7ZI
03/04/11   KE7LKW   6 - KE7LKW K7ZNP K7ALG N6KIX NX1P VE7AUL
03/11/11   K7ZNP   5 - K7ZNP NU7T N6KIX NX1P WB7SWB
03/25/11   KE7LKW   4 - K7ZNP KE7LKW K7ALG N6KIX
```

For more net info, see the CW Assistance / QRS Nets section of the web site.

## 4a. THE NAQCC CW ASSISTANCE PROJECT:

The CW Assistance project is coordinated by Ron K5DUZ. If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact Ron at **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**

Your e-mails telling me of your small victories in mastering Morse/CW are encouraging. Let me know if you are having any problems with any aspect of learning CW or improving your speed and I'll try my best to help you.

Now back to our discussion of learning and becoming proficient with Morse/CW.

So far we've covered the Koch method of learning CW and how we should strive to let our subconscious mind be free to "hear the unique character sound and recognize the corresponding character". We've learned that it is important to put down our pencil and learn to copy "in our heads" by visualizing the characters as we recognize them. Our goal is to be able to copy 15 to 20 wpm CW with ease and without conscious effort. We will not write down every character as received, but rather will separate copying from recording information into two separate, loosely connected tasks, i.e. "copying behind". We will learn to copy commonly used words as "word sounds". We will practice regularly, preferably several times daily, for short periods of time. By being dedicated to achieving our goal of becoming proficient CW operators we will succeed!

I've been asked on quite a few occasions about sending CW, whether to practice sending in conjunction with receiving practice, whether to use a straight key or a keyer, etc. The huge advantage we have today with our computers is that we learn what "perfect" CW sounds like. I first learned CW using the "dit dah look-up table method" by listening to the Novice CW band. As you can imagine, the CW characters I heard were usually far from perfect. I did not have access to an "Instructograph" paper tape machine or to code practice records. The only perfect CW that I heard was the ARRL Code Practice sessions. Based upon my experiences, I recommend learning to receive first and to leave sending for later. The reason for delaying learning to send is that once you are adept at receiving you will have the concept of perfectly formed characters deeply implanted in your mind. You will be very conscious of imperfectly formed characters and the goal of course is to send "perfect" CW, indistinguishable from computer sent CW. To me, it makes no sense to have to unlearn bad habits formed before one knows what correctly sent characters sound like.

I also recommend to begin sending practice with a straight key. Sending "perfect" code with a straight key is a skill much to be admired and appreciated. Considerable practice is required to master a straight key, but when the receiving operator compliments you on your "fist" you will feel that your efforts have been rewarded!

Once you have mastered the straight key, then you can try your hand at bugs, side swipers and keyers. Each type requires their own particular skill set, so be prepared to make a significant effort in mastering it. One misconception by many newcomers to electronic keyers is that they somehow send "perfect" CW. In the hands of an experienced CW operator a keyer can be used to send close to perfect CW, but it can also be used to send absolutely horrid CW in the hands of an inexperienced operator.

There is some evidence that practice sending faster than one can receive will increase receiving speed. I think this results from forcing the human mind to react faster than it is used to doing. The downside to this method is that bad habits can easily be formed, so if you try this method please be on guard against corrupting your "perfect" fist.

We are in the process of making some changes to the NAQCC website in order to increase the amount of CW learning information available there. We will also include some means of facilitating a "Code Buddy" program for those that would like to locate someone of a similar skill level. We will list those hams willing to "Elmer" newcomers to CW or to ham radio. A list of recommended CW practice programs and other learning aids will be featured.

Many computer based CW practice programs are available, many are free of cost and others available at some nominal price. The NAQCC has chosen the free "Just Learn Morse Code" program as our practice program of choice, but many other good programs are available. We have chosen JLMC because it has a capable feature set and we wanted to choose one program that we could develop some level of expertise with. By all means continue to use the program that you are comfortable with. We will be listing other programs that we are impressed with on the NAQCC website as we get time to evaluate them.

Until then, HPE CU SN ON CW! Ron, K5DUZ

We need YOU to make our CW Assistance project work. If you need help with any ham radio matter or are willing to help others with your expertise, please contact our CW Assistance director:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**

Also see CW Assistance Project on the web site.

## 5. RECENT AWARD AND PRIZE WINNERS:

Here's a comment from the winner of the chess set, "Hi Tom and John, Got a package in the mail this morning and when I opened it there was a beautiful chess set. I had forgotten about winning the drawing in the September challenge so this was a great surprise. Thank you Tom for donating the chess set and thanks to you John for pulling my name out of the hat and all that you do for the club. 72 and 73 Don Younger W2JEK"

And from the winner of the Radio Boys book, "Good morning John: Who's in charge of Donated Prize Award? Now that I've enjoyed reading the Book, I would like to send it back to be donated as a prize to someone else. 72 Brion"

Thank you Brion. Mike KC2EGL is our prize manager who may be contacted via the info found via the 'Contact Us' link on most every page of the web site.

More prize info from Hal K6RF relayed via Mike, "The following Calls have sent gift certificates and their NAQCC QSL cards have been processed/shipped. N4OLN K4UK KM6NN. N4OLN and KM6NN Ship today 3/18 K4UK ships Monday 3/21 - Hal K6RF." All of our hidden call winners should have received their gift certificates by now and the ball is in your court to order your free QSL's.

CERTIFICATES:

1000 MPW
#0102 - K0MDS - 2/8/11
#0103 - K0MDS - 2/8/11

Alphabet Prefix - World

#0002 - G5CL - 2/3/11

ENDORSEMENTS and/or WEB SITE LISTINGS:

Alphabet Prefix Honor Roll - World
436 prefixes - G5CL - 2/3/11

Suffix Words Honor Roll - SWA
218 words - K3WWP - 2/5/11

Suffix Words Honor Roll - SWA/GAIN
176 words - NU7T - 2/4/11

Not a single new award in March. That's discouraging, especially with conditions picking up right now very nicely and DX becoming widely available again with the high bands opening just about every day.

Full List of all award winners here.

## 7. MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

This section is managed by Paul N8XMS and any questions about it should go to PAUL142857@GMAIL.COM. Paul selects members at random and asks them if they would like to be featured in the Member Spotlight in the newsletter.

### Tom Piltdown KA4FUN #40111

My introduction to ham radio was a little bit unusual. It started with a trip to the dentist for a new filling. A few days later, as I sipped on my orange juice at breakfast, I started to feel a very strange and uncomfortable sensation in my jaw. There was a rhythm to it but it wasn't like music. Over the next couple of weeks, every Tuesday and Thursday morning I would feel these strange pulses while drinking my orange juice. Trips to my dentist, family doctor, and even my psychiatrist didn't help. (Although I did learn that I have suppressed feelings of hostility toward my mother's uncle whom I am named after.) Then one day I was talking over the fence with my backyard neighbor Paul, N8XMS, about my miserable situation. Paul

carefully questioned me about the exact times that I felt the pulses and then sheepishly admitted to me that they corresponded exactly to a CW net that he participates in. Some quick experiments soon confirmed that I was indeed receiving his kilowatt CW with my dental fillings shown here!

Paul's a really nice guy and wanted to help me find a solution to my problem. We soon discovered that if he reduces his power to 5 watts I still had perfect copy, but without the unpleasant zinging that the kilowatt caused. One thing led to another and I soon passed the ham radio exam and received my ticket.

Paul and I have continued to operate and experiment with QRP. We have recently been working on an 80-meter QRPp rig using my dental fillings. A few SMT parts on a little circuit board with some special pads that I can bite down on worked great, but hooking up the 12-volt power supply really hurt! We eventually found that we could fix that problem with a screwdriver - the kind made by mixing vodka with my orange juice. To date my most exciting QSO with this little rig was a 2XQRPp contact with K3WWP. At least I think that it was K3WWP - I really had to juice it up with the screwdrivers to get good copy.

I would really enjoy meeting you on the air sometime. I usually hang out at the normal QRP watering holes around the cocktail hour. Cheers and 73.

Tom - KA4FUN

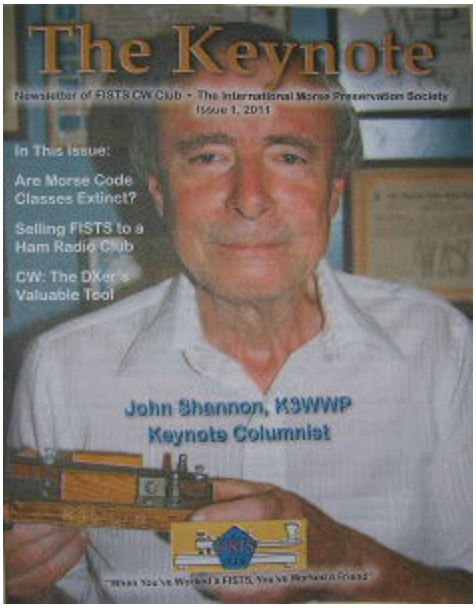
For more info on Tom and Paul's unusual situation click here

## 7. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS:

This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. Deadline for submitting news items for the next newsletter is April 7. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window. DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the member submitting them, and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** The DX just keeps on coming. It's like going back in time to the last sunspot maximum. Well, that's an exaggeration, but the high bands are definitely working again. My highlight for March was completing my milliwatt WAC when I worked Asia in the Russian DX contest. RW0CWA was the guilty party who turned the trick for me on 20 meters. Shortly after that I got R0QA for a second Asian mW QSO. All in all I made 19 QSO's in the Russian contest (which is an everybody works everybody contest like the CQ WW DX

Contest), 18 of them with my 930mW. I got a bit excited when I couldn't get JT5DX from Mongolia after 2 or 3 tries with mW and went to 5 watts and easily worked him. Even before I saw the movie 'Destination Gobi' with Richard Widmark, I always thought of Mongolia as an exotic country and I wanted that QSO badly even though I have two previous Mongolian QSO's as well as a QSL from JT1DA. I wish I'd kept trying with mW though as he became even stronger and I probably could have made it with mW. There were also a good many more mW DX QSO's in my March loggings. One just yesterday was a nice special prefix from Lithuania - YL21A on 17 meters. The better conditions and DX have really increased my interest and activity time lately. It's great!


The Keynote
Newsletter of FISTS CW Club • The International Morse Preservation Society
Issue 1, 2011
In This Issue:
Are Morse Code Classes Extinct?
Selling FISTS to a Ham Radio Club
CW: The DXer's Valuable Tool
John Shannon, K3WWP
Keynote Columnist

Also I was recently 'honored' by having my picture on the cover of the FISTS Keynote magazine. That meant a lot to me since FISTS is every bit as near and dear to my heart as is our NAQCC. I love both clubs and they are the only ones which I am interested in these days. I mention the honor not for bragging, but as another means of saying thanks to all of you who have sent your wonderful comments about the picture and my column in the magazine dealing with my QRP streak. I wish I could thank each one personally, but I just can't. The fact that I can't doesn't diminish my appreciation in any way though, so THANKS again.

- **From Dick K2HT #3727 -** Typical field day groups are always on the lookout for a simple multi-band wire antenna which is inexpensive, easy to build, easy to get into the air and efficiently puts out RF energy. The Missouri Windom OCF Dipole Antenna is an old favorite field day antenna so I decided to revisit this excellent old-timer. Just to prove that you can teach "old dogs" new tricks, a search was made on the internet.

An excellent weblog by VA3STL showed what a local Canadian club used with success during field day on 40, 20, 15 and 10 meters. Then I went to my favorite antenna web site, http://www.cebik.com/ created by W4RNL, L. B. Cebik(SK). Here I picked up a few ideas from his OCF HF-137 antenna. I then consulted the 1970 ARRL Antenna Handbook, Twelfth Edition, pages 191-192. A search of the QST Archives turned up two excellent articles written by K1POO in the May 1996 and October 1996 issues of QST. The archives also pointed to an antenna choke article written by M0AOP/K4DG in the September 1997 issue.

The OCF antenna has a 200-ohm input so a 4-to-1 balun at the feed point is required. The antenna is 69' long and is fed with 52-ohm coax. The Missouri Windom OCF Dipole has a 12-foot leg and 57-foot leg on each side of the balun. A choke consisting of 6-8 turns of coax, six inches in diameter at the balun feed point, is used.

Special thanks go to KC0ZIU and KD0ZZ for supplying the MFJ swr/wattmeter that was so easy to read without my glasses and for making more than 40 trips up and down my driveway to get the antenna built and erected.

Testing of the Missouri Windom was done using a Ten Tec Century 21 (no internal antenna tuner) with 10 watts output to the MFJ SWR/Wattmeter feeding the antenna. Test results are as follows:

**SWR 40 Meters:**
**7.0 1.7**
**7.1 1.3**
**7.2 1.0**
**7.3 1.1**

**SWR 20 Meters**
**14.0 1.15**
**14.1 1.2**
**14.2 1.3**
**14.3 1.4**
**14.35 1.4**

**SWR 15 Meters**
**21.0 1.1**
**21.1 1.15**
**21.2 1.2**
**21.3 1.3**
**21.45 1.4**

**SWR 10 Meters**
**28.0 3.0**
**28.1 3.0**
**28.2 3.0**
**28.4 4.0**
**28.5 2.8**
**28.6 2.8**
**28.7 1.9**
**28.8 2.2**
**28.9 1.7**
**29.0 1.5**

I was very pleased with the SWR reading on 40, 20, and 15 meters. A transistor transceiver can be used across the entire amateur band with ease and without an internal tuner. The results for the 10-meter band were a bit disappointing but when I connected the antenna to a Kenwood TS-570 with an internal antenna tuner, it brought the SWR down to 1:1 with ease. I am a bit confused with the readings on 10-meters because the chart curve is a bit irregular!

The first day the antenna was raised, QSOs were made to Chicago, Florida, Revilla Gigedo Islands (40 and 15), and Hot Springs, AR using 80 watts of power. The height of the balun was approximately 25 feet with the 12-foot and 57-foot legs at 20 feet.

**From Ron K5DUZ #5 -** Thirty-two "Math Champs" honor students from the 6th and 7th grades at Blaine Middle School in the state of Washington will be building and operating Small Wonder Lab Rock-Mites. The Math Champs represent their school in the Washington State Math Championships. They have finished the first week of their amateur radio program, which is a regular part of their schoolwork - not just an optional after-school activity.

The 32 students each belong to a work group of four students representing a DX country, and they have corresponding mock callsigns which are not currently assigned to any real hams:

Joseph: 3A2JSA, Gavin: 3A2GM, Monika: 3A2MK, Lauren: 3A2LKO, Candace: 9N7CO, Delaney 9N7DN, Kaylee 9N7KM, Darien 9N7DJ, Logan: ET3LN, Chase: ET3CL, Sawyere: ET3SH, Allan: ET3AL, Sarah: HH6SD, Holly: HH6HJ, Andy: HH6AB, Chloe: HH6CF, Kavish: JW5KC, Tayah: JW5TT, Emily: JW5ER, Riley: JW5RF, Jakob: S21JF, Kolby: S21KWS, Spenser: S21SDO, Ian: S21IM, Michael: XW1MB, Jalen: XW1JK, Matt: XW1ME, Zack: XW1ZO, Preston: ZP4PB, Parker: ZP4PB, Greg: ZP4GA, and Ben ZP4BH. Their math teacher sports EY8NH.

The students can recite the Alpha, Bravo, Delta alphabet, thanks to instruction from Wayne McFee, NB6M. They have started practicing ten Morse characters at a character speed of 20 WPM. For "transmitting" practice, they are singing "dits" and "dahs" for E I S H 5 T M O and SOS. Next, they will add A U V 4 and F to that list. Outside of class, they are listening to those same characters on their home computers using the free G4FON Koch Morse trainer program: http://www.g4fon.net/CW%20Trainer.htm

So far, the Math Champs have been learning about radio waves, the relationship between RF wavelength and frequency, and the whole RF spectrum from ELF through EHF, with special attention to MF, HF, VHF and UHF, where most hams hang out. The Rock-Mite will be their practical window into the world of radio and electronics. They will study the circuit diagram in detail in addition to building their own rigs. Making contacts on equipment which they understand and have built themselves should be especially meaningful.

All of this costs money. Some have already made contributions which we very much appreciate. These eager youngsters need your help. If you are wondering how much would be appropriate for this group of 32 students: $30 will buy one student a Rock-Mite, associated connectors, and a simple wire antenna. $15 will pay one student's required exam fee. Whatever you can afford, you will be giving a big boost to these eager future hams.

Lyle Johnson, KK7P, and Heather Johnson, N7DZU, have generously offered a dollar-for-dollar challenge grant which will match contributions received at the Blaine Middle School by April 15, up to a total of $500.

All 32 students will be earning their Technician tickets. We will make sure of that. Some especially ambitious ones, who get a big kick out of studying, are considering tackling both the Technician and the General Class exams in the same sitting. Most of those aspiring Generals will be building the 14.060 MHz version of the Rock-Mite. The rest will build the 7.030 MHz Rock-Mite.

Please make out your check or money order to Blaine Middle School designated for the Math Champs Amateur Radio Program. All contributions are tax deductable. If you include your name, callsign and mailing address, the school will send you a tax receipt, plus you will receive a special thank you from one of the students after the FCC has issued them callsigns. Maybe you can then make a sked to chat with that new ham on the air.

**Please address the payments to:**
**Blaine Middle School**
**975 H Street**
**Blaine, WA  98230**

**Attn: Math Champs Amateur Radio Program**

(NOTE from K3WWP - That is an excellent thing the Blaine Middle School is doing, especially including Morse Code in the project. If it's in your heart to help them out with a donation, please mention your NAQCC membership when you donate. The NAQCC is going to help out with a donation yet to be decided upon. We'll have details in the next newsletter coming out in two weeks. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have all these youngsters as NAQCC members! With the RockMite rigs, it seems they will definitely be interested in CW/QRP operation. I'm thinking that our challenges would be of a particular interest to them.)

All comments on specific sections of the newsletter should go to the email address given in that section. Any other general comments go to:

**NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.